

W. Glenn and Doris Henninger House
317 Morningside Drive
Llysven Neighborhood
Altoona
Blair County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5903

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

W. GLENN AND DORIS HENNINGER HOUSE

HABS No. PA-5903

Location: 317 Morningside Drive

Date of Erection: 1941-51

Description: Owner-built down to its handcrafted windows and latches, this highly individualistic "cottage" has steeply pitched intersecting gables with cornice returns on the front gable, and a decidedly rustic character, enhanced by rough wood shingles and the prominent brick and fieldstone chimney centered in the street face of the ell. Shed bump-outs in the ell enlarge the floor plan to a nearly full second story. A minor front-facing gable in the middle of the upstairs, marking the single room from which the second floor later expanded, is now obscured by a porch accessible via a metal stairway from the front walk. The owner added a one-story two-car garage and workshop in 1965.

History: Glenn Henninger is a carpenter, born in 1912 in what he calls a "shanty," now the garage, behind 314 Wordsworth Ave., the house his carpenter father, William, was building for his family. In 1941, a lean year for building materials in Altoona, Glenn and Doris, his wife of five years, began constructing this house on Morningside Drive on a lot that belonged to an uncle. The original house had two rooms--one upstairs and one down--over a cellar Henninger dug himself with a pick, shovel, and wheelbarrow to cart the dirt into the back yard. It was a plank house, built out of recycled boxcar siding with the bolts burned off, purchased from the railroad for \$26 a load, and supplemented by whatever other materials were available from Modern Cabinet Company, the woodworking and cabinetry shop Glenn started in a two-car garage on Burns Avenue. He worked on the house in his spare time, and they were able to move in as soon as the roof was completed, late in 1941 or early in '42. At that time, the only house on Morningside between theirs and Mill Run was the Engelmans's at No. 318 (HABS No. PA-5904). The Henninger house does not appear on tax records until 1943. Most of the neighbors, they remember, were less than pleased to have what they considered a shanty on their street. That original incarnation of the house never had a "finished" look; instead, it seemed to be eternally under construction. The original two rooms grew to six, including three bedrooms for their growing family, and the age of each new room addition was disguised by the wood shingle finish Mr. Henninger chose because "I could do 'em a few at a time." He custom-made all the windows at "the shop," as well as the doors, latches, and flooring, and built most of the furniture. The whimsical chimney he made of flawed bricks and "found" stones from Lock Mountain. The house was pretty much in its present form by 1951, the year the Henningers finally acquired the lot. After their children left home, they converted the upstairs into a separate rental apartment and moved back into the original downstairs of the compact house.

Sources: City directories. Tax records. Deeds: 264/639, 388/249, 520/168, 645/89, 645/91. Interview: W. Glenn and Doris Henninger, 317 Morningside Drive, August 11, 1989.

Project Information: This report was part of a larger project to document the city of Altoona, Pennsylvania. The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), Robert Kapsch, chief, at the request of America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), Randy Cooley, director. An overview of the history of the city (HABS No. PA-5784) and an overview of Llyswen (HABS No. PA-5787) provide context for these buildings as well as a comprehensive list of sources. See also additional HABS reports on buildings in the city and other neighborhoods.

This report was prepared by Kathy Edwards in the summer of 1989 under the supervision of Alison K. Hoagland, HABS historian, and Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian. Edwards's and other project historians' work was published as Railroad City: Four Historic Neighborhoods in Altoona, Pennsylvania (Washington, D.C.: HABS/HAER, National Park Service, 1990), edited by Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian, and Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.